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October 12, 1962

MEMORANDUM TO: G - Mr. Johnson
FROM: ARA - Edwin M. Martin
SUBJECT: Track Two

The following is the pertinent portion of Mr. Rostow's paper:

"I believe we should consider the possibility of a Two-Track covert operation.

"Track One would consist of a heightened effort to move along the present Mongoose lines. The minimum objective here would be harrassment: the maximum objective would be the triggering of a situation where there might be conflict at the top of the Cuban regime leading, hopefully, to its change or overthrow by some group within Cuba commanding arms.

"Track Two would consist of an effort to engage Cubans more deeply, both within Cuba and abroad, in efforts of their own liberation. This requires an operation with the following characteristics:

"a. Authentic Cuban leadership with a considerable range of freedom to implement ideas and to assume risk.

"b. Minimal U.S. direct participation: ideally, one truly wise U.S. adviser — available, but laying back; equipped to provide finance, but not monitoring every move; capable of earning their respect rather than commanding it by his control over money or equipment.

"c. Basing outside the United States.

"d. A link-up with the scattered and sporadic groups and operations now going forward of their own momentum in Cuba.

"e. A plan of operation which aims at the overthrow of Castro primarily from within rather than by invasion from without.

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"f. A long enough time horizon to build the operation carefully and soundly.

"In suggesting that Track Two be studied -- and sharply distinguished from Track One -- I am, of course, wholly conscious of our failure of last year. But, as I read that failure in retrospect, its root lay in: U.S. bureaucratic domination; the lack of a Cuban political and organizational base; and a plan of operation that hinged on a type of overt invasion by a fixed date rather than the patient build-up of a true movement of national liberation. I'm sure it would be easy to argue that such a movement could not be generated against a Communist control system; that the Cuban refugees lack the capacity to play their part in such an enterprise with skill and minimal security; etc. And I am in no position to reply with confidence to such argument. On the other hand, Cuba is not located in Eastern Europe; and, presumably, some Cubans have learned something from last year's failure, too.

"On the balance, I am prepared to recommend that Track Two be sympathetically studied and that General Lansdale be asked to formulate a design for it."

The underlying philosophy is one which we have felt for some time merited exploration.

There is attached (Tab A) as you have requested, a paper describing the more important policy considerations bearing on this course of action.

Also attached (Tab B) is the ARA memorandum, previously forwarded to you, describing some of the political thinking which leads us to the conclusion that we should experiment with this course of action.

Attachments:

Tabs A and B

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